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Press release from the International Union of Tenants

Stop evictions! People need a home!

For more than a year the COVID-19 pandemic has caused massive human and economic harm on a global scale. Still it isn't over, and the recovery will require immense investments, financially and on a human level. The housing sector as a result is subject to the same challenges as before the pandemic – just even deeper and more severe. Tenants, as a vulnerable group on the housing market, as a result of loss of income have faced evictions and rent arrears.

Governments have tried to address the challenges posed by the pandemic with mixed outcomes; some targeting low-income and vulnerable households. There is a need for renewed public and private investment in affordable and social housing as this can also contribute to economic recovery from the crisis. The IUT expresses its solidarity with families who are evicted from their home because of rent arrears or unpaid mortgages- it is not their choice. Access to safe and secure housing is a fundamental right, recognised by the Universal Declaration on Human rights, the European Social Charter and the European Charter of Fundamental rights, and many national constitutions.

Evictions without suitable alternative accommodation must be stopped.

The pandemic has had profound effects socially, but also on the global economy. These effects will continue impacting our societies for a long time after the end of the pandemic. Therefore, moratoriums on evictions must continue, temporary contracts are to be automatically prolonged; and, rent arrears are to be paid off over an extended period of time.

States should create solidarity funds to provide bail-out options for tenants incapable of paying rent arrears, but also prioritize the creation and / or review of targeted financial support measures such as housing allowances. Rent freezes and rent caps must also be considered.

The International Union of Tenants (IUT) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit membership umbrella organization for global tenants' organisations. It was founded in 1926 in Zürich, Switzerland. Since 1956 its head office has been in Stockholm, Sweden with an EU liaison office in Brussels since 2008. The organisation consists of 74 national and regional tenant organisations in 47 countries and is financed through membership fees. IUTs purpose is to:

- promote the exchange of information and knowledge among its members,
- safeguard the interests of tenants and to promote affordable and decent rental housing across the world. IUT is a non-party political organisation, working along democratic lines.

IUT considers housing to be a fundamental human right in every society. Housing needs to be addressed locally, nationally and internationally. Affordable and sound housing is one of the safeguards for peace and security, a fundamental pillar in all democratic societies and necessary for labour mobility. Lack of affordable housing and homelessness are major ingredients in social exclusion. www.iut.nu